

## HOUSE OF COMMONS

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**Tuesday, March 12, 1968**

The house met at 2.30 p.m.

### GRAIN

#### WHEAT, OATS AND BARLEY—STATEMENT AS TO FINAL PAYMENTS

**Hon. Robert Winters (Minister of Trade and Commerce):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to make a brief statement regarding final payments for barley and oats. Producers delivered 35,104,357 bushels of oats and 106,155,792 bushels of barley to the Canadian Wheat Board in the 1966-67 crop year. The pools for these two crops were closed on January 31. The amounts of the final payments to be distributed are \$8,402,616 for oats and a record \$35,798,202 for barley.

These are not payments by the government of Canada, but represent the net returns of the Canadian Wheat Board in the marketing of western Canadian oats and barley for the 1966-67 crop year. The board will begin mailing the final payment cheques for barley today, and immediately after completion of the barley payments the final payment cheques for oats will be distributed. The average final payment for barley of 33.7 cents a bushel has been exceeded only once, and the average final payment for oats of 23.9 cents per bushel is just slightly below last year's record payment.

I beg leave, Mr. Speaker, to table the statement being issued today in Winnipeg by the Canadian Wheat Board regarding these final payments.

**Mr. Speaker:** Has the minister leave to table this document?

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Winters:** The 1966-67 wheat pool account was closed on February 29 and the necessary accounting is now being completed. I expect to be able to make an announcement in about two weeks, when the board will be in a position to commence mailing the final payment cheques for wheat. I may say, however, that through international co-operation toward the implementation of the international grains arrangement scheduled for July 1, the marketing of wheat is now more orderly both as to demand and price.

**Mr. W. H. Jorgenson (Provencher):** Mr. Speaker, the farmers of western Canada will be pleased to learn that the cheques in payment for oats and barley will be issued soon. Since sales during the past crop year have been much below previous years there is a very serious shortage of cash in the hands of farmers with which to pay the necessary production costs. I might add that as a result of the fact this government has seen fit to contribute greatly to the increased cost of production, these cheques will be most welcome. During the past two years farm costs have risen at an alarming rate, and farmers are caught in a very serious cost-price squeeze.

We are pleased that the final payments on both oats and barley are relatively stable in comparison with past years. However, farmers will be looking forward with great expectations to higher payments on the 1966-67 wheat crop, although I doubt very much if those expectations will be realized.

**Mr. Ed Schreyer (Springfield):** Mr. Speaker, we listened with interest to the statement just made by the Minister of Trade and Commerce. One thing that became obvious very quickly was that in terms of dollars and cents the amount involved to the producers in western Canada was almost identical to that of last year. There has been an increase in deliveries of oats to the board of about 15 million bushels, and there has been an equivalent decline in the deliveries of barley. The amount of the final payment from the board this year comes out to within a cent or two of the amount that was paid last year. It is fair to say, as the last speaker has said, that the cost-price situation in agriculture in western Canada remains acute. The amount incoming in receipts to producers remains relatively static, but meanwhile the cost of production soars.

• (2:40 p.m.)

The minister and his colleagues should be made aware once again that the cost of production indices for agriculture have increased by about 80 points from 1962 up to the present. However, there is nothing to balance off this increase in the cost of production, inasmuch as the price the producers receive for